

Grab 'n' Go Lesson Reading Village

Good People Grab 'n' Go Lessons are designed to provide educators with all of the education materials needed in one document to teach a 60-90 minute lesson on a specific topic. Some Grab 'n' Go Lessons will require photo copies while others will require internet access and a projector and speakers; some will require markers while others will require post-it notes each one is unique. We encourage educators to adapt the materials to their environment and learners. (Note: All stock graphics are free on <http://www.freedigitalphotos.net>)

SUPPLIES: a dozen children's/young adult books; Arrival Activity Matching Game sheet; pens, markers, blank paper; internet, cell phones/laptops/tablets; copies of the Good Person Profile; projector/screen/speakers; copy of the news articles; copies of the text sheets

7-12 minutes Arrival Activity Part One

1. Take a selection of classic children's and young adult books and place them standing up on a table. (Choose at least a dozen).
2. Give each person as they come in a pencil/pen and a Matching Game sheet.
3. On this Matching Game Sheet you will place a picture of the cover of the books and a list down the side of 12 key characters or plot points
4. The idea is for people to try and match the plot points/characters with the correct book. They aren't allowed to open the books on display, but just use them for inspiration.
5. When everyone is "finished" see if anyone got them all correct (maybe give a bookmark as a prize or some other small item).

Then as a large group, talk about some of the findings.

- How many of the participants got more than 5 right? 6 right? 7 right? And so on.
- Which of these books were the easiest to align with the clues and which were the most difficult?
- How many of you have at least five of these books in your home (or had them when growing up)?
- Do you think we take for granted access to books?
- Do you think we take for granted the ability to read?
- Who taught you how to read?
- Have you helped a young child learn to read or practice reading? What was that experience like? What did YOU learn in the process?
- Do you think we take for granted having access to school and education?

5-7 minutes Set Induction

Explain to your participants that today we are going to learn about an organization in Colorado that works to change literacy and learning in remote Guatemala villages. Make sure they know the definition of *literacy*. Explain that the organization – Reading Village – takes a two-step approach ... training teens to be reading tutors (they call them Reading Promoters), and then having those teens go back into their communities to teach and mentor others.

- How might learning to become a tutor help a young person improve their life and their future? (sense of accomplishment, getting future jobs, being able to financially help themselves/family, build a network/community of co-learners and teachers)
- Why might a person in Colorado start an organization to help communities in Guatemala?

8-12 minutes The Good Person Profile: Linda Smith

Read aloud Linda's story or copy and distribute to participants (handout for copying at end of lesson)

Sometimes things happen when you least expect it. **Linda Smith** always enjoyed helping people. Sometimes it was as a volunteer and at other times it was part of her career. A teacher, a mentor for inner-city kids, helping to end homelessness; Linda clearly believed in *tikkun olam* and used her talents in many ways to make the world a better place for everyone.

Life in Central America always held a particular interest for Linda. In fact, one of her degrees is in Latin American Studies and becoming fluent in Spanish was a lifelong goal that she eventually achieved. With frequent trips to Guatemala, Linda came to love the culture and the people and wanted to help them if she could. When she faced some changes in her own life she decided to visit the country which was for her a place of serenity filled with smiling kids. As she traveled around she would speak to local children and often asked a common question that we have all heard, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"



If she had asked this question of *you* what would you have answered? A teacher? A doctor? An astronaut? But, here in Guatemala Linda usually received a blank stare when she asked that question. Most kids in Guatemala are surrounded by profound poverty and have little reason to hope things might change. More than 50% of native Mayan adults cannot read which has several implications—very few books in the community and children are not read to or exposed to the benefits of reading. One day Linda came upon a tiny local library where a group of kids were learning to read. She noticed a difference immediately. Kids who knew how to read could dream about what *might be*. The "dreaming" helped change their reality. That experience is what inspired Linda to begin Reading Village.

Reading Village works in small villages and develops an environment where reading is important and encouraged. They form leadership groups of middle and high school students who act as mentors to younger children, reading *with them* and encouraging them to succeed. The program provides scholarships for the leadership group as well as free books for local institutions and groups.

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Discuss:

- Why do think it is important that someone pay attention to struggling youth?
- Why is learning to read so important for the future of these young Guatemalan children?
- Linda says, "The dreaming helped change their reality." What do you think this means? Why is "dreaming" important for young people to do?
- What does encountering books and the stories they contain do to help children shape their future? (Think back to the books you encountered when you came in.)
- Why do you think Linda set up this program to first train older students to be Reading Promoters as part of a leadership training program?

7-15 minutes Getting to Know Reading Village

Watch these videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwvEiO8-mLw> (3:13) [Note: this video has a fundraising message – but the general content is really important to the Reading Village mission and story]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p0YhKQT-UI> (3:48) - have the participants make notes about what they observed.

Read this article: <http://impacthubboulder.com/guest-blog-reading-village/>

If you have access to computers, cell phones or tablets and the internet, you can have the group do some research about Reading Village by looking at these references:

- Website: <http://readingvillage.org/>
- Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/readingvillage?fref=ts&ref=br_tf

Discuss:

- How much does it cost a person in your local community to attend public school? (Including annual books and supplies)? What percentage of a typical family income is this? (The average two-parent income in the U.S. is \$81,000.) Compare to what you heard in the Reading Village videos.
- How far is the local school from your house? How does this compare to schools in the Guatemalan villages?
- What other challenges do you think the families living in these communities face?
- What do you think is the MOST IMPORTANT part of the work Reading Village does in Guatemala?

15-25 minutes What's Jewish About Linda and her work?

Included in this Grab 'n' Go is a Jewish Text Study sheet for your use. Depending on the age of our participants, you may want to choose one Jewish text to explore via a projector, a few values via posters, or provide them with the entire text sheet. For advanced learners, you may want to provide them a *Tanach* for access to some of the original texts.

The texts provided for this Grab 'n' Go focus on four key areas of learning:

- Education/Learning
- The Learner
- The Teacher
- The Community

One method for engaging these texts:

1. Divide your participants into three groups - representing the Children/Learners, the Teens/Reading Promoters, and the Community.
2. Give each group a full set of texts. Encourage them to read through them all to get the general idea of what the texts tell us.
3. Then, have them consider – through the lens of the group they were assigned, what Jewish “commandment” or rule would they write to add to this list of texts? (A Modern Commentary)
4. Bring the entire group back together and have each share what they wrote and explain how they got to that conclusion.
5. Compare and contrast the keywords/phrases in the new commentaries they wrote.
 - a. What were the overlapping ideas?
 - b. Were there any that stood out as completely “unique”?

Some questions for consideration:

- Why do you think Judaism has such a focus on learning and education?
- Most of these texts refer to the obligation to teach Torah – do you think this commitment to learning extends beyond Jewish learning? Why or why not?
- In Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Torah Study 1:2, we learn that our obligation to teach extends beyond our own children/grandchildren ...
 - At what age do you think you are obligated to start teaching others? Why?
 - Who else in your life do you currently teach? What do you teach?
- How are Linda and her team at Reading Village ensuring that there is wisdom and understanding in these Guatemala villages?

In the Text Study Sheet, we have provided resources for two **Advanced Texts** should learners be interested in fuller text and debate.

4-8 minutes The Good People Making a Difference with Reading Village

They say it takes a village to raise a child, but what does it take to raise a village out from illiteracy, poverty and hopelessness?

Linda Smith was a hard-working professional and tireless volunteer whose previous efforts spanned locations throughout the US to as far as rural Guatemala where she witnessed so many people living on the periphery. It was the remote villages of Guatemala — where the majority live below the poverty line, where the literacy rate is the lowest in the Western Hemisphere and where kids cannot even begin to dream of a future — that ultimately attracted her attention and inspired Reading Village.

Reading Village has a singular and powerful purpose: to transform lives through literacy. The program leverages reading as a tool to help youth achieve their full potential. Where books are inaccessible, libraries are scarce and school systems are sub- standard the challenge is immense, and yet, Reading Village has made major strides through innovative approaches that have a significant ripple effect.

As part of the Leaders & Readers program Mayan teenagers receive scholarships, mentoring and leadership training, enabling them to complete high school. In return, they volunteer as “reading promoters”, running several weekly reading circles for the young children in their villages. What began seven years ago with just six reading promoters in one single village has grown exponentially so that today over 70 teen mentors in six villages reach more than 3,500 children who now not only read but also dream of a brighter future.

Our funds underwrote an additional Community Coordinator to train and mentor teens in new villages. Previous funding has helped pay for books for the villages.

Reading Village’s Program Profile on our website:

<http://www.goodpeoplefund.org/program/reading-village>

Getting to Good

Depending on the time you have, this can either be a short conversation about some options to get involved or can be a hands-on project adjusted to your needs. Here are some hands-on ideas:

- Plan an organization-wide Light Up Literacy program for Chanukkah. More information and resources can be found here: <http://readingvillage.org/2010/09/light-up-literacy/>
- Create a Reading Buddy/Tutoring program in your community. Ask a local literacy group to help train your program participants how to be effective buddy readers. Partner with a low-income, at-risk community center to create opportunities for your participants to put their new skills to work.
- Have your participants research illiteracy rates in your community or nearby. Have them meet with state legislators about funding for literacy programs and education.
- Conduct a gently-used book drive. Create a relationship with a low-income school where you can create a free lending library for these books.
- Have your participants create book marks and book covers for Linda to deliver on her next trip to Guatemala. Remember, the learners there are reading in Spanish.
- Put together a community Learning Journey with Reading Village (learn more here: <http://readingvillage.org/take-action/learning-journey/>)

Your group's tzedakah donations can be contributed to The Good People Fund and earmarked for our work with Reading Village <https://www.goodpeoplefund.org/mitzvah-donate/>.

Why donate to The Good People Fund to distribute your tzedakah?

Shulhan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 249:6

One able to motivate others to contribute, receives greater reward than the giver.

Shulhan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 249:7

A person should not contribute to a tzedakah fund unless he knows that its management is reliable.

Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 256:1

Every Jewish community is obliged to appoint charity administrators, respected and reliable individuals who will collect from each person what they are able to contribute ...and give to each poor person sufficient for their needs for the week.

Mishnah Peah 8:7

A public fund needs to be collected by no less than two people, and distributed by no less than three people.

For a copy of our Annual Report, visit: http://is.gd/GPF_2015AnnualReport



Grab and Go Lesson
Reading Village
Text Resources

Daniel 2:21

God gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to those that know understanding;

Proverbs 4:7

The beginning of wisdom is: Get wisdom; yea, with all thy getting get understanding.

Proverbs 4:13

Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life.

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way that child should go, and even when that child is old, the child will not depart from it.

Pirkei Avot 2:5

... a bashful one cannot learn, a short-tempered person cannot teach...

Pirkei Avot 4:1

Ben Zoma would say: Who is wise? One who learns from every person. As is stated (Psalms 119:99): "From all my teachers I have grown wise, for Your testimonials are my meditation."

Pirkei Avot 4:5

Rabbi Ishmael the son of Rabbi Yossef would say: One who learns Torah in order to teach, is given the opportunity to learn and teach. One who learns in order to do, is given the opportunity to learn, teach, observe and do.

Pirkei Avot 4:12

Rabbi Eliezer the son of Shamua would say: The dignity of your student should be as precious to you as your own.

Pirkei Avot 5:15

There are four types among those who sit before the sages: the sponge, the funnel, the strainer and the sieve. The sponge absorbs all. The funnel takes in at one end and lets it out the other. The strainer rejects the wine and retains the sediment. The sieve rejects the coarse flour and retains the fine flour.

(turn over)

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Talmud Torah 2:5

25 children learn with one teacher. If there are between 25 and 40, they place another person with the teacher to assist him in educating them. If there are more than 40, they appoint for them two teachers. (see Bava Batra 21a for a full explanation and debate)

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Torah Study 1:2

Just as it is a person's duty to teach their child, so it is their duty to teach their grandchild, as it is written: "Make them known to your children and your children's children" (Deuteronomy 4:9). This obligation does not refer only to one's child and grandchild, but it is a duty resting upon every Jewish scholar to teach all those who seek to be their students, even though they are not that scholar's own children, for it is written: "You shall teach them diligently to your children" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, The Laws of Torah Study, 2:1

Elementary teachers are appointed in each province, district and town. If a town is without an elementary school for children, its inhabitants are placed under a ban [shunned by the greater Jewish community] until they engage teachers for the young children. If they have failed to do so, the town is destroyed; for the world is maintained only by the breadth of schoolchildren.

Rambam, The Laws of Torah Study, 4:4

When a teacher's students do not understand, the teacher should not get upset with them; rather, the teacher should review and teach the material as many times as necessary until the students understand the law thoroughly. Also, a pupil should not say "I understand" when they don't understand, and instead should keep on asking questions repeatedly. If the teacher gets angry and excited on the student's account, the student should say: "Teacher, this is Torah! I must study it, even though my capacity is limited."

Rambam, The Laws of Torah Study, 4:5

A student must not feel ashamed on account of their colleagues who have learned a subject at once, or soon after it was taught a second time, while it has taken that student many times to grasp it. If the student were to feel embarrassment because of this, then that student would be attending school without learning anything. For this reason, the early sages declared: "The bashful cannot learn, nor can the quick-tempered teach" (Pirkei Avot, 2:5)

Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 419

This is what they said (Baba Batra 21a): Communities everywhere have an obligation to appoint teachers for their children. A city without school children will be destroyed. 25 children should be taught by one teacher.

(See the next page for Advanced Learner Text Study)

Advanced Learners may want to explore this debate and consider how it relates to the many layers of Reading Village:

Pirkei Avot 4:20

Elisha the son of Avuyah would say: One who learns Torah in his childhood, what is this comparable to? To ink inscribed on fresh paper. One who learns Torah in his old age, what is this comparable to? To ink inscribed on erased paper.

Rabbi Yossei the son of Judah of Kfar HaBavli would say: One who learns Torah from youngsters, whom is he comparable to? To one who eats unripe grapes and drinks [unfermented] wine from the press. One who learns Torah from the old, whom is he comparable to? To one who eats ripened grapes and drinks aged wine.

Said Rabbi Meir: Look not at the vessel, but at what it contains. There are new vessels that are filled with old wine, and old vessels that do not even contain new wine.

Advanced learners may want to read Bava Batra 21a in its entirety to understand different nuances in the emphasis on education.

For more texts related to this topic, visit on1foot.org

The Good Person Profile LINDA SMITH



TOP: Linda (center of photo) with the children she is mentoring to be Reading Promoters

RIGHT: Linda showing some of the bookmarks students in the U.S. made for Reading Village



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